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AUTHOR Herman, Paul F., Jr.
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ABSTRACT

The contribution of international exchanges (e.g., cultural activities, tourism, student exchange) to detente enhancement is assessed. International exchanges have a capacity for engendering trust and for providing cultural, political, and economic benefit, two characteristics of policy acts which tend to enhance detente. A comparison of four very cooperative years in the U.S.-Soviet relationship (1969, 1972, 1973, and 1974) shows high levels of cultural exchange accompanying a favorable bilateral political climate. An examination of the two-year periods of time preceding periods of incipient detente (1963, 1967, 1970, and 1974) shows that many times, but not always, mounting levels of exchange activity do precede times of earnest Soviet-American political accommodation. This analysis does not imply that exchanges cause detente, but that they do most likely facilitate it. However, detente-relevant interactions, including exchanges, are not functional to the end of promoting detente when launched singularly, but must be part of a purposive package. This is not to say that there would be no benefits from exchange activity in the midst of a tense bilateral climate, only that they would be on a personal or academic level. (RM)

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DETENTE : A ROLE FOR U.S.-SOVIET EXCHANGES?

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Paul F. Herman, Jr.

Doctoral Candidate

Graduate School of Public and International Affairs

Russian and East European Studies

University of Pittsburgh

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Detente : A Role for U.S.-Soviet Exchanges?

The line of reasoning followed in this paper takes its cue from the title of the panel itself; namely, The Political Uses and Abuses of International Exchanges. The terms "use" and "abuse" are evaluative, connoting evaluation in terms of a specified function or standard. These evaluative concepts are different from other ones, such as "presence" or "absence", or "high" vs. "low" levels of activity, which are merely descriptive. Therefore, we must infer use or abuse in terms of a specific yardstick. I submit that given the pervasive politicization of all aspects of U.S.-Soviet interchange, such areas of interchange must be evaluated in terms of the degree to which they improve (or harm) bilateral political relations. Using the conditional imperative form, the evaluative base for this paper can be established as follows: If detente is the supreme political value in Soviet-American relations, and if exchanges are an important component or dimension of a state's detente strategy, then the political use of exchanges results in detente enhancement, and the political abuse of exchanges results in detente impediment or reversal. Although there have been historical episodes where both the U.S. and USSR have used exchange activity for espionage purposes, I assume that these episodes were aberrations, and not reflective of either side's mainstream motivation for engaging in exchanges. Therefore, detente-reversing exchange activities need not be purposefully hurtful or malevolent (e.g. intelligence gathering), but may simply attenuate or abrogate existing exchange arrangements, thus precluding their potential detente-enhancing function. Examples of detente-enhancing exchange activities include the signing of an agreement providing for a new type of exchange venture, the quantitative or qualitative expansion of an existing agreement's provisions, an increase in aggregate movements of persons (e.g. tourism), the occurrence of significant one-time or non-formalized visits (e.g. parliamentary delegations), etc. Examples of detente-impeding exchange activities include the canceling of an exchange agreement, the paring down of an existing agreement's provisions, both sending and being discovered at sending exchangees whose primary motive is unconnected with an exchange program's stated or legitimate rationale, accusing a visiting exchangee for untoward

motives and activities in spite of only inconclusive or spurious evidence, etc.

What will be the method employed in this paper to assess international exchanges' contribution to detente enhancement? First, I will explicate the characteristics of policy acts which tend to enhance detente, and then gauge international exchanges as to the extent to which they embody these characteristics. Secondly, I will look at the four most cooperative years in the U.S.-Soviet relationship since 1958 (the year of the first U.S.-Soviet biennial cultural exchange agreement), in contrast with the four most conflictual years, to see if there is any difference between the aggregate levels of exchange activity across these two sets of four one-year periods.* One may only infer association, rather than causality from such an exercise. Therefore, thirdly, I will take four non-contiguous years of incipient detente, and examine the two-year period immediately preceding each. If there are grounds for inferring a causal detente-enhancing role for international exchanges, then we might expect the levels of exchange to be lower at "times t-2" (two years before the year identified as incipient detente) than it is at "times t-1", thus reflecting a positive temporal progression towards improved relations.

My research shows that actions which enhance detente do one of two things, or both; namely, "engender trust" and/or "provide benefit": to what extent do international exchanges fulfil these two functions? Trust basically involves a willingness to extend oneself in engagement with another, without fear that one's efforts or vulnerability will be exploited. In a worst-case scenario, there are conceivable costs and vulnerabilities involved in exchange

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* Since this is a paper about international exchanges, and not detente per se, I will not discuss the mechanics of my method for measuring the level of relative Soviet-American amicability or hostility per annum (e.g. the state of the relationship); however, the years since 1958 which I have identified as periods of incipient detente -- 1963, 1967, 1969-74 -- should be intuitively acceptable to the reader after only a cursory review of the historical record.

participation -- technology or military secrets may be syphoned off or acquired, one's population may be propagandized by visiting exchangees, and exchangees sent abroad may themselves be "brain washed" or won over. Assuming the international political environment does not change, these abuses of exchanges would make a state's pursuit of a cold-war policy more difficult. Therefore, a superpower willing to receive the other's exchange participants demonstrates trust in the integrity of the other's motives (which is recognized by the other), and if the other side indeed sends bona fide artists, scholars and scientists to the receiving superpower, it is in turn demonstrating trust in the legitimate intellectual basis for the exchanges themselves (which is recognized by the other); should both sides execute their ends of the bargain faithfully, mutual trust is heightened further.

We can clearly see that international exchanges have a capacity for engendering trust; what about for providing benefit? Whereas the question concerning the utility and reciprocity of Soviet-American exchanges is an interesting one, and one deserving (at least) treatment as a conference-paper topic of its own, I will deal with this question in shorthand. One of the more persuasive streams of evidence concerning this question involves the fact that in 1977 the American National Academy of Sciences issued two comprehensive evaluative reports on the scientific exchange programs. One was a two-year effort (the Kaysen Report) that examined the interacademy exchanges (between the American and Soviet academies of sciences). The second (the Garwin Report), produced by the Office of Science and Technology Policy was an examination of the programs carried out under the bilateral Science and Technology Agreement. The Kaysen Report concluded that on a strictly scientific basis the U.S. had received sufficient scientific and technological benefits to justify the exchanges' continuation. Factoring in the political and cultural benefits obtained, both reports came out overwhelmingly in favor of the exchanges. I would additionally refer the reader to an excellent article by John Kiser which also addresses the mutually beneficial nature of U.S.-Soviet interchange.[1.] Given the types and amounts of benefits derived from past experience with U.S.-Soviet exchanges, and the

fact that such exchange opportunities have perhaps not been pursued as purposefully as they might have been, I am led to conclude that international exchanges have a significant capacity for benefit provision.

Bilateral exchanges have indeed graded out well according to the trust/benefit formula. Additionally, exchanges' suitability for contributing to detente goes beyond even this. Detente is essentially perceptual in nature; it is a process concerned with relational change, where each side's image of the other is transformed from a dire enemy image to something more benign reflecting a limited and legitimate competitive relationship. The advantage of exchanges is that they impact directly on each other's perceptions. Other detente-relevant activities such as arms control and trade agreements are arranged, with subsequent perceptual impacts depending on how the agreements fare. The unmediated nature of person-to-person exchanges make them a salient instrument to be used in a detente strategy.

We will now test out the question; have levels of exchange activity tended to go up historically in times of incipient detente or relatively cordial relations? The political use of exchanges should show such an association. We will take the four most accomodative years in the U.S.-Soviet post-1958 relationship -- namely, 1969, 1972, 1973, and 1974 -- and compare them with the four most conflictual -- 1960, 1961, 1980, and 1981. When levels of exchange activity are rank ordered per annum, we would expect the four highest ranks (first through fourth) to correspond to the four years of relative U.S.-Soviet accomodation.* Table I presents the results of this exercise.

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* There is a slight element of tautology (e.g. using something to measure itself) in this exercise, in that cultural exchanges are also considered in the calculation of the per annum scores measuring the overall state of the relationship itself; however, I do not feel that factoring cultural exchanges out of the overall scores would change their relative magnitudes.

Political Climate	Year	Level of Exchanges: Raw Scores	Level of Exchanges: Rank Orders
favorable	1969	.23	IV
	1972	.865	I
	1973	.715	II
	1974	.375	III
unfavorable	1960	.145	V
	1961	.065	VI
	1980	-.53	VIII
	1981	-.035	VII

TABLE I

The expectation was borne out. High levels of cultural exchange seem to accompany a favorable bilateral political climate, or in my terminology, periods of incipient detente. But how can we know if the exchanges themselves have played any part in creating this climate?

To assess the grounds for infering causality we will look at the two-year periods preceding each of four years which have been characterized elsewhere as periods of incipient detente. Should levels of U.S.-Soviet exchanges tend to increase from (year) "time t-2" to (year) "time t-1", and from "time t-1" to the year of incipient detente, we would have established low-power trend lines that let us infer at least a contributory role to detente being played by exchanges. The years of incipient detente I will use in this exercise are 1963, 1967, 1970 and 1974. The results of this exercise are presented in Table II.

t-2 : Raw Score[1.]	t-1 : Raw Score	Incipient Detente : Raw Score
1961 : .065	1962 : .495	1963 : .205
1965 : .07	1966 : .12	1967 : .265
1968 : -.06	1969 : .23	1970 : .275
1972 : .865	1973 : .715	1974 : .375

(1. : raw score is for level of exchange activity)

TABLE II

In three of the four cases, the movement from "t-2" to "t-1" was indeed positive, or in the direction of increased exchanges; in the fourth case (1972-73), the levels were quite similar and

quite high, with the positive progression perhaps being not so pronounced due to the fact that 1972 and 1973 were themselves periods of incipient detente. As for the relationship between "t-1" and the year of incipient detente itself, in two cases the level of exchange activity continued to climb, in two cases it did not. The fact that forward progress in instituting exchange endeavors may tend to fall off once incipient detente is reached can probably be explained according to one of two reasons: first, uninstitutionalized political detente in a topsy-turvy world is often short-lived and quickly reversed (usually snuffing out exchanges as it goes); and second, with the success of an exchange programme, which tends to be relatively low-priority in the eyes of political leaders, these political leaders upon achieving incipient detente tend to shift their focus onto more high-priority agenda items (e.g. trade, arms control, crisis management, etc.). Despite the slightly equivocal nature of the above data, I nonetheless suspect that mounting levels of exchange activity tend to precede periods of earnest Soviet-American political accomodation. This does not mean that exchanges cause detente, but they do most likely facilitate it, being part of what Rudolph Rummel calls a "general cooperative structure of expectations".[2] If the political use of exchanges is to engender detente, and if historically, exchange activity has been closely associated with, and even facilitative of detente, then has the vehicle of international exchanges in fact been abused? The surprising and somewhat counterintuitive answer is "no".

The contention that exchanges have not been abused by the superpowers in recent history is meant to be provocative and stimulative of discussion. If exchanges have not in fact been abused, then why do most of us have a lingering feeling that they have? Perhaps we recall the U.S.' nearly wholesale slashing of exchange programs after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, or after their recent move into Afghanistam; or perhaps we recall how the Soviets suppressed exchange activity during the mid-1960s at the height of American involvement in the Vietnam conflict. Yet the question remains; were these policy orientations toward

slashing or suppressing exchange linkages inappropriate or dysfunctional from the standpoint of an ultimate interest in detente? Again, the answer appears to be "no". Erich Weede has persuasively shown, using extensive statistical evidence, that many detente-relevant interactions and manifestations -- e.g. trade. lowered defense spending, legal bonds, lowered verbal conflict, etc. -- when examined in isolation by themselves, do not affect conflict proneness, and he concludes that international cooperation does not have any systematic and replicable impact on international politics.[3] The point is that detente-relevant interactions, including exchanges, are not functional to the end of promoting detente when launched singularly, but must be part of a purposive package or overarching policy. A detente package or policy can only be constructed and resolutely pursued when a state's political leadership firmly backs such a policy, with the climate surrounding the Czechoslovak, Afghanistan and Vietnam examples above clearly precluding such backing. This is not to say that there would be no benefits from exchange activity in the midst of a tense bilateral climate, only that they would be on a personal or academic, rather than interstate level. If we adhere to the proposition that the correct use of exchanges is to further detente, then the lower-level exchange benefits do not warrant their pursuit.

The overall point to be made here is that if one wants to preserve the salience of exchanges as a detente-enhancing instrument, one must apply them selectively and discriminatively. This does not mean that one turns exchange activity on and off like in a Pavlovian experiment, where the injected stimulus compels a desired behavioral response. It only means that the unbroken continuation of exchanges will debase their detente-enhancing capacity, thus sacrificing a higher-order good for more modest ones.

FOOTNOTES

1. John W. Kiser, "Technology is not a One-Way Street", Foreign Policy, Summer 1976

2. Rudolph Rummel, Peace Endangered, (Beverly Hills : Sage Publications, Inc., 1976), p. 43

3. Erich Weede, "Threats to Detente : Intuitive Hopes and Counter-intuitive Realities", European Journal of Political Research, no. 5, 1977